

News

Kmart manager earns EDC award

The Economic Development Committee presented a special award to Kmart's manager, Corey Reeve, and his staff Friday morning for their contributions to Kingsburg's economic development efforts.

The committee wanted to recognize Reeve for the significant strides that have been made to improve the quality of the store and for his willingness to meet with potential retailers to help promote the city.

Kmart has also provided generous support to the community through their involvement with the Lion's Club, Parent Club, KCAPS and Del Monte.

Economic Development Committee chair Steve Safarjian said that since Reeve took over as the manager of Kmart, the store has really gotten involved in the community.

"Not only charity organizations, but businesses in town are willing to work with Kmart, and Kmart is willing to work with them," he said of why they are deserving of this award.

John Wells, general manager of Del Monte, was the committee member who nominated Reeve for the award because of the shoe safety discount program he helped them implement. Del Monte recommends that all their employees wear non-slip safety shoes, and when Wells looked into the various safety shoe discount programs that were available, he realized that there was going to be a great deal of time and paperwork involved.

When Reeve offered Kmart's assistance, it eliminated 100 percent of the administrative work for Wells. Kmart now stocks the shoes needed by Del Monte employees, and also offers them a discount of 25 percent. Wells said that since the majority of his employees are local, the convenience of buying their shoes in Kingsburg at a discounted price has been very beneficial.

Wells said that Reeve "has been very responsive to the needs of the community which is very important in the retail business."

While the shoe safety discount program was instrumental in Wells' decision to nominate Reeve, it was not the only reason. He has also been very impressed with the numerous improvements Reeve has made to the store and their merchandise.

A 1994 graduate of Kingsburg High, Reeve began his career with Kmart at the Little Caesar's in the Kingsburg Kmart a few months after graduation, working side-by-side with several high school friends. He was promoted to the manager of Little Caesar's after two years, and spent a total of six years there before becoming the assistant manager of the Clovis Kmart, where he spent three years. He moved to Olympia, WA., to manage a Kmart there, not realizing how much he'd miss Kingsburg until he was actually gone.

He didn't have any plans to move home, but said that one day he received an unexpected call from the Kingsburg Kmart. "I wasn't even thinking about it, and they asked me to come back," he said.

Reeve returned to Kingsburg in September 2004, and when he took over as Kmart's manager, he said that one his goals has been "just to be part of the city." He has remained focused on keeping the store clean and well-stocked, and boosting the morale of the employees.

"The associates are having more fun, which is better for the community," he said. Jolene Polyack, a member of the Economic Development Committee, agreed, commenting that "under Corey's leadership, the entire staff has become more customer-service oriented."

Reeve said that his desire for Kmart to give back to his hometown isn't triggered only by the goal of increasing business. "We're the biggest store in Kingsburg," he said. "They support us, so we need to support them back."

Reeve's wife, Rebecca, is also from Kingsburg. They have two children, 5-year-old Courtlyn and 3-year-old Cole.

By Amy D. Fienen

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